



## Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

	Data Field	
1.	<b>Awarding Agency Name:</b>	Illinois Department of Public Health
2.	<b>Agency Contact:</b>	Name: Scott McFarland Phone: 217-685-5930 Email: Scott.McFarland@Illinois.gov
3.	<b>Announcement Type:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial announcement <input type="checkbox"/> Modification of a previous announcement
4.	<b>Type of Assistance Instrument:</b>	Grant
5.	<b>Agency Opportunity Number:</b>	N/A
6.	<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	2080 AmeriCorps State
7.	<b>CSFA Number:</b>	482-00-0786
8.	<b>CSFA Popular Name:</b>	Serve Illinois - AmeriCorps
9.	<b>CFDA Number(s):</b>	94.006
10.	<b>Number of Anticipated Awards:</b>	30-50
11.	<b>Estimated Total Funding Available:</b>	\$8,000,000 – 15,000,000
12.	<b>Single Award Range:</b>	\$100,000 - \$4,000,000
13.	<b>Funding Source:</b> Mark all that apply	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal or Federal pass-through <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Private / other funding
14.	<b>Is Cost Sharing or Match Required?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
15.	<b>Indirect Costs Allowed?</b>  <b>Restrictions on Indirect Costs?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, provide the citation governing the restriction: No more than 5.26% of awarded funds may be used to recover indirect costs – 45 C.F.R. 2517.710 Section 121(d)
16.	<b>Posted Date:</b>	September 12, 2019
17.	<b>Application Date Range:</b> Leave the 'End Date' and 'End Time' empty if there is no deadline.	Start Date: September 12, 2019 End Date: November 17, 2019 End Time: 11:59 pm CST
18.	<b>Technical Assistance Session:</b>	Session Offered: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Session Mandatory: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Date and time: September 24: 10am – 12pm, October 1: 2pm - 4pm, October 2: 10am – 12pm, October 24: 10am – 12pm, November 5: 2pm – 4pm Conference Info/Registration Link: Bidders Webinar information is available at

## **Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity**

### **A. Program Description**

#### **1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

The mission of Serve Illinois is to improve Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the State. Serve Illinois exists to fulfill a federal mandate requiring states to establish a service commission in order to receive funding through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Appointed by the Governor, the 40 Illinois Commissioners (25 voting and 15 non-voting) represent leaders in education, public health, faith-based, labor, not-for-profit entities, business, volunteerism, national service, youth, and seniors.

In partnership with IDPH, Serve Illinois oversees all aspects of program administration and training for the AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps provides trained, dedicated people to help non-profit organizations accomplish their missions and to make more effective use of volunteers. AmeriCorps members assist in meeting locally identified community-based needs.

The mission of CNCS is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligible Applicants* section) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

#### **CNCS Focus Areas**

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following focus areas:

##### **Disaster Services**

Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters. Economic Opportunity

##### **Economic Opportunity**

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

## Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

## Environmental Stewardship

Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires.

## Healthy Futures

Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

## Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by CNCS programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS programs.

## 2. Funding Priorities (See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for further information about some of the priorities)

In order to receive priority consideration for submitting an application within a *Notice* priority (ies), applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high quality program design. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

Programs that do not focus on the areas listed above are encouraged to still apply as Serve Illinois recognizes diverse communities have diverse needs.

CNCS and Serve Illinois seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Economic Opportunity – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. [https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS\\_Economic\\_Opportunity\\_Evidence\\_Brief\\_2019\\_508.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Economic_Opportunity_Evidence_Brief_2019_508.pdf)  
OR  
increasing economic opportunities for communities by preparing people for the workforce.
- Education - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. [https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS\\_Education\\_Evidence\\_Brief\\_112318\\_508.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf)

- Healthy Futures - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. [https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF\\_Evidence\\_Brief\\_FINAL\\_v2\\_508.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf)
- OR
- reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- Veterans and Military Families - positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Faith-based organizations.

### *Serve Illinois Commission Priorities*

Additionally, in Illinois, special consideration will be given to proposals that represent Serve Illinois's identified priorities. Those priorities are as follows:

- 1) Focus Areas
- 2) Geography
- 3) Target Populations

### *Focus Areas*

In addition to CNCS Focus Areas, Serve Illinois also seeks to focus on the following areas:

- Intergenerational Initiatives ( not senior citizen serving senior citizen)
- Violence Prevention and Intervention
- Public Health (access to mental health services, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and prevention awareness)
- Environmental (conservation and green energy)
- Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Summer Education
- Senior Services
- Homelessness

### *Geography*

Serve Illinois currently serves 72 counties in Illinois, with a goal of serving all 102 in the state. Serve Illinois gives consideration to all parts of the state, with special consideration to programs whose service sites are located in geographic regions that are under-served by current Commission-funded programs. These under-served, geographic regions are currently in the Northwest and East Central parts of Illinois.

### *Target Populations*

Serve Illinois will give special consideration to programs that target Veterans, Military Service Members, Military Families, At-Risk Youth, members of the LGBTQ community, and people with Disabilities. Targeting is defined as serving said population or recruiting Members from said population.

### **3. Performance Measures**

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may also be included if desired; however, all performance measures must be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and represent significant program activities. CNCS and Serve Illinois do not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. CNCS and Serve Illinois values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures.

CNCS and Serve Illinois expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions.

### **4. Program Participation Requirements**

Successful applicants will be required to participate in a number of meetings throughout the grant period, including "National Service Opening Day" activities (October), three (3) national days of service (Martin Luther King Day (January), AmeriCorps Week (Spring), Veterans Day of Service (November)) and other programmatic-related trainings or events (e.g., Program Directors' Training (July 9-11, 2019)).

All AmeriCorps programs are required to recruit additional volunteers to work alongside the AmeriCorps Members. Additionally, program will assist Serve Illinois in strengthening the volunteer connector infrastructure of the state by partnering with existing volunteer connector organizations, and when existing organizations don't exist in a service area, working to develop new volunteer connector organizations.

Successful applicants will also be required to identify one to two AmeriCorps Member(s) to participate in Illinois Disaster Corps. Disaster Corps is a composite team of AmeriCorps programs that allow Members to be deployed for disaster operations within Illinois. The Disaster Corps will have a trained group of members to provide services that will include, but not be limited to, disaster volunteer coordination, debris removal, disaster damage assessment, and disaster preparedness activities such as sandbagging. However, the primary focus of the group will be volunteer management.

Members of the Disaster Corps will serve the mission of their hosting program until a region in Illinois is affected by a disaster. The members of Disaster Corps will then make disaster response their primary function as a national service member and deploy to the site of the disaster within 24 hours of request. Time spent with Disaster Corps will count towards the Member's service/training hours.

New programs will be required to schedule a New Program Start-up Visit with Serve Illinois staff between August and November 2019. This will be an on-site visit.

### **4. Program Authority**

CNCS's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.)

Serve Illinois' legal authority to award these grants is found in the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service Act (20 ILCS 2330/)

## **B. Funding Information**

This award is utilizing ☒ federal pass-through, ☐ state and/or ☐ private funds.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Estimated Available Funds**

CNCS and Serve Illinois expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. CNCS and Serve Illinois reserve the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

### **2. Estimated Award Amount**

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions – as determined by the scope of the projects.

### **3. Project and Award Period**

The project period is generally one year, with a start date proposed by the applicant. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS and Serve Illinois awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

### **4. Type of Award**

AmeriCorps Operating Grants: CNCS and Serve Illinois may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. Professional Corps are not eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. See the Eligible Applicants section and the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information. CNCS and Serve Illinois will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

### General Summary

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$15,479	\$15,479	\$800	\$1,000*	\$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time only See Sec. D.6.a.2 for further requirements	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time
Budget Submission Required	Yes	No		Yes, if requesting operating funds	No
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes			No
Special Requirements	N/A	N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	No			
Available to new Applicants	Yes	No	Yes		

### C. Eligibility Information

#### New Applicants

CNCS and Serve Illinois encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from CNCS and Serve Illinois to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an

AmeriCorps grant for the first time.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grant but are not eligible to apply for Full-cost Fixed Amount grants.

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

The following Non-Federal entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Institutions of higher education (2 CFR §200.54)
- Local governments (2 CFR §200.64)
- Nonprofit organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- States (2 CFR §200.90)

Organizations that propose to operate in only Illinois must apply through the Serve Illinois Commission NOFO. An Illinois-only application that is submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than to Serve Illinois will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed. See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Applicants must request a minimum of 8 Member Service Years (MSY)
- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS and Serve Illinois must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

### **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

#### **Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. CNCS and Serve Illinois does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

#### **Cost Reimbursement Grants**

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant's match can be federal or non-federal cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section D.6. Funding Restrictions for more information.

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 and below.



AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS and Serve Illinois on a Periodic Expense Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) does not count toward the matching requirement.

### **Alternative Match**

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted. State programs submit requests for alternative match to Serve Illinois. Serve Illinois will submit on behalf of state applicants.

### **3. Indirect Cost Rate**

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants will either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 5/10 percent fixed option, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR § 200.413. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in the CNCS's web-based management system. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

### **4. Other, if applicable**

Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS and Serve Illinois are aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

- has been assessed,
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice.<sup>1</sup> A similar restriction

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<sup>1</sup> However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this *Notice*. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interest of the federal government

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS and Serve Illinois funding.

#### **D. Application and Submission Information**

- ***Address to Request Application Package***

Applications must be submitted via the Illinois Department of Public Health's Electronic Grants Administration and Management System (EGrAMS), accessible at [idphgrants.com](http://idphgrants.com).

Since high-speed internet access is not yet universally available for downloading documents or accessing the electronic application, and applicants may have additional accessibility requirements, applicants may request paper copies of materials by contacting:

This *Notice* should be read together with the federal CNCS NOFO, AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the National Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <http://www.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/AmeriCorpsNOFO.aspx>. The full Regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov).

- ***Content and Form of Application Submission***

- a. Application Content

In CNCS's web-based management system, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the system
- Narratives
  - Executive Summary
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
  - Evaluation Plan (if applicable)
- Logic Model
- Standard Form 424 Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification (<https://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM>, and <https://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>)

## **b. Page Limits**

There are page limits for the Narrative and Logic Model

### **Narrative**

Applications must not exceed 10 pages for the Narratives or 12 pages for Rural Intermediaries and Multi-State applications with more than five operating sites. CNCS and Serve Illinois will use the number of locations in the “multi-state operating sites” field in CNCS’s web-based management system to determine whether a multi-site application has more than five operating sites. The “multi-site operating sites” field can be found by clicking on the “operating sites” link in the system. Multi-state applicants that list five or fewer operating sites cannot exceed 10 pages for the Narrative.

The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:

- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The application page limit does not include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

### **Logic Model**

The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in CNCS’s web-based management system.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.

CNCS will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

- ***Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)***

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, this link provides a connection for SAM registration: <https://governmentcontractregistration.com/sam-registration.asp>;
- (ii) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and

(iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency.

The State awarding agency may not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the State awarding agency is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the State awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

- ***Submission Dates and Times***

**a. Notification of Intent to Apply**

All applicants must attend one of the bidder conference webinars in order to apply. Attendance will be noted as intent to apply. Detailed information on the webinars is available at <http://www.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/AmeriCorpsNOFO.aspx>.

**b. Application Submission Deadline**

Applications are due **Sunday, November 17, 2019 by 5:00 p.m. Central Time**. This deadline applies to new, recompeting, and continuation applicants.

**Note: The CNCS submission deadline is January 8, 2020. Illinois has set the earlier deadline of November 17.**

**c. Additional Documents Deadline**

Any required additional documents are due on the application deadline. See *Submission of Additional Documents* section for other guidance.

**d. Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline published in the Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. In order to overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
  - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
  - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
  - any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
  - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that CNCS and Serve Illinois receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to [dph.serveillinois@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.serveillinois@illinois.gov) no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with CNCS and Serve Illinois staff, including an applicant's program officer, is not a substitute for the letter. Applicants are required to continue working in [CNCS's web-based application system](#) and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application. CNCS and Serve Illinois will determine whether or not to accept

a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

**Please note:** CNCS and Serve Illinois will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance listed above, and submit your application as soon as possible.

- ***Intergovernmental Review, if applicable***

This *Notice* is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

- ***Funding Restrictions***

- a. Member Living Allowance**

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions are noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and should request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

**Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

<b>Service Term</b>	<b>Minimum # of Hours</b>	<b>Minimum Living Allowance</b>	<b>Maximum Total Living Allowance</b>
Full-time	1,700	\$14,279	\$28,558
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$20,159
Half-time	900	n/a	\$15,119
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$11,339
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,559
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,040

### **Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements**

**1. Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993** are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

**2. EAP Grantees** are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

**3. Professional Corps Grantees** must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits including child care are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS (federal or matching share.)

### **b. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

New and recompeting Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$15,479*
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	\$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grant	\$15,479

\*Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$15,647 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members who will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

\*\*CNCS requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS. CNCS and Serve Illinois will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need based on the materials reviewed by the Office of Grant Management.

CNCS and Serve Illinois reserves the right to determine whether an applicant is a Professional Corps and whether the legal applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CNCS operating funds. Given the high demand for AmeriCorps funding there may be specific circumstances where CNCS and Serve Illinois determines that either a legal applicant is not a Professional Corps program or is unlikely to demonstrate a need for operational funds due to other funding resources. Where CNCS and Serve Illinois' due diligence review of a Professional Corps application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted funding that is

in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, CNCS and Serve Illinois may choose to not provide additional operational funding.

**c. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award**

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. CNCS will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

• ***Other Submission Requirement***

**a. Electronic Application Submission in CNCS's web-based management system**

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [CNCS's web-based system](#). CNCS and Serve Illinois recommends that applicants create an account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate field no later than ten days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using CNCS's web-based management system under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via [Questions](#) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit their application via CNCS's web-based management system.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in CNCS's web-based management system, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier to the address below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

Serve Illinois Commission  
Illinois Department of Public Health  
422 S 5<sup>th</sup> St, First Floor  
Springfield, IL 62701

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to paper applications. CNCS and Serve Illinois does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.

**b. Submission of Additional Documents**

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:

#### All applicants

- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section and Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for detailed instructions by evidence tier.

#### Recompeting applications

- Evaluation report, if required. Please see the *Evidence Tiers* definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and Section E. Evaluation Plan for further information.
- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- Federal debt delinquency (if applicable)

#### Rural Intermediaries (New and recompeting)

- Letters of support from the consortium members

#### New and Recompeting applications

- New and recompeting applicants requesting over \$75,000 and All New to CNCS applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit a Financial Management Survey (FMS) and supporting documents located at: [http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management-select Financial Management Survey under the Application Certification Forms Section](http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management-select-Financial-Management-Survey-under-the-Application-Certification-Forms-Section).

Failure to submit the required additional documents by the deadline will have a negative effect on the assessment of your application and/or on the determination of the application's eligibility to advance for review.

Additional Documents must be emailed to [dph.serveillinois@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.serveillinois@illinois.gov) with the labels outlined below. Emails should include the following information:

- Subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]– [Application ID number]
- Body of the email should identify:
  - The legal applicant name and its point of contact information
  - The application ID number
  - A list of documents that should be attached to the email
- Attachments to emails should include
  - Individually saved files that are clearly labeled
  - Each file should also include a header or title within the body of each additional document to include the legal applicant name and application ID number.
  - If the size of an applicant's files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)"

Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. CNCS and Serve Illinois will not review or return them.



## E. Application Review Information

### Article I. **Criteria**

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. CNCS and Serve Illinois urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this *Notice* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Program Design</b>	<b>50</b>
Theory of Change and Logic Model	24
Evidence Tier	12
Evidence Quality	8
Notice Priority	0
Member Experience	6
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	<b>25</b>
Organizational Background and Staffing	9
Compliance and Accountability	8
Culture That Values Learning	4
Member Supervision	4
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	<b>25</b>

### A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].\* The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

\*If the program is not operating in a CNCS focus area, omit this sentence.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

Serve Illinois will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications to [www.Serve.Illinois.gov](http://www.Serve.Illinois.gov), in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

## **B. Program Design (50 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

### **1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)**

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.

## **2. Evidence Base (20 points)**

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (12 points):

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

In 2018, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 9%, Moderate 5%, Preliminary 40%, and Pre-Preliminary 46%. As these figures indicate, CNCS and Serve Illinois values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome and impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review

any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the *Notice* instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

#### Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this *Notice* and will not be considered for funding.

All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field of the application (See Section E. Evaluation Plan); however, information provided in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

#### **3. Notice Priority (0 points)**

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2018 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section and more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the *Funding Priorities* section and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

#### **4. Member Experience (6 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.
- The applicant will *foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.*

### **C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

#### **1. Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)**

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.

#### **2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)**

- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements (if applicable).
- The CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality (if applicable).

#### **3. Culture that Values Learning (4 points)**

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.

#### **4. Member Supervision (4 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

### **D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**This criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for "See budget"**

### **1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)**

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens:

- Current indirect rate cost if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project, including for Fixed Amount applicants.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

#### **E. Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 percent)**

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field that includes the following:

- A description of the applicant’s data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high quality system.
- A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding.

First-time applicants should be aware that CNCS and Serve Illinois may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding. For more information about how to develop a high-quality data collection plan, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network

(<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/ameri corps/building-effective-data-collection-plans-presented-october-12-2017>).

If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of “recompeting” below) the program must submit its evaluation plan in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” section of the Narratives field in CNCS’s web-based management system. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report as an attachment (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information), and must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field in the system. Evaluations plans submitted outside of the system will not be reviewed.

Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation, available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cncs-evaluation-policies>):

- A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results
- Outcome(s) of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes
- Proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components;
- Description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation
- Analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the collected data
- A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The proposed budget

Information provided in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

For more information about evaluation plans visit the CNCS Knowledge Network's Evaluation Resources:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/planning-evaluation>.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.700-710:

- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external impact evaluation of the program (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance), and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS and Serve Illinois for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS and Serve Illinois for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.

The "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 20,000 characters.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees that are recompeting for funds may be eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this Notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found on the CNCS website.

If the request for the alternative evaluation approach plus the Evaluation Plan itself will exceed the character limit of the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the Evaluation Plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system.
- Include a note in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field stating that the applicant is requesting an alternative evaluation approach.
- Include the alternative evaluation approach at the END of the application narrative with the heading "REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION APPROACH." This section of the application narrative will not count against the page limit.

**F. Amendment Justification (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

**G. Clarification Information (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

**H. Continuation Changes (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

Article II. ***Review and Selection Process***

CNCS and Serve Illinois will make determination about applicants utilizing the data provided within the application and supplemental materials. These determinations may be different than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

*a. Compliance and Eligibility Review*

CNCS and Serve Illinois staff will conduct a Compliance Review to determine if an application meets the compliance requirements published in this *Notice* and advances to the next stage of the review process. Applications determined non-compliant will not be considered for funding.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Is eligible to submit directly to Serve Illinois
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submit an application with a minimum of twenty AmeriCorps member positions (slots) (competitive) or 8 MSY (formula).

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be non-compliant and ineligible will not receive an award.

*b. Application Review*

All applications will be reviewed by Serve Illinois to determine if they qualify for competitive submission. Those who qualify may receive clarifications requests in November or December. Serve Illinois will then forward all competitive applications to CNCS for its review.



Starting in January, all applications regardless of competitive submission status will be reviewed for the formula competition. Those reviewed may receive clarification requests in April through May.

An external peer review will be conducted on all applications between January and May. While recommendations of the peer review will be a key factor in the funding decision, Serve Illinois considers the findings of the review to be non-binding recommendations. Serve Illinois maintains final authority over funding decisions and reserved the right to consider factors other than the applicant's final review score in determining final grant recommendations in order to maintain a diverse portfolio.

Serve Illinois reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to execute the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications submitted to CNCS and Serve Illinois in response to this Notice.

### *c. Risk Assessment*

CNCS and Serve Illinois staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds and the applicant's past performance (if applicable.) This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS and Serve Illinois determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award.

In evaluating risks, CNCS and Serve Illinois may consider the following, but not limited to:

- financial stability
- financial capability and capacity to manage Federal funds
- quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  - accuracy of data reported
  - validity of performance measure data reported
  - conformance to the terms and conditions of the previous federal awards
  - meeting matching requirements
  - the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
  - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
  - Dun and Bradstreet
  - SAM, and/or
  - "Do Not Pay"
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and finding of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990

- applicant organization's annual report
- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
- responses to the Financial Management Survey and supporting documentation
- amount of funding requested by the organization

Serve Illinois will assess recompetiting subgrantees' past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. In evaluating programmatic performance, CNCS and Serve Illinois will consider the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees:

- Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and retention
- Compliance with 5 day enrollment and 30 day exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
- Monitoring findings - CNCS and/or OIG (if applicable)
- Commission Rank

Additionally, CNCS and Serve Illinois may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If CNCS and Serve Illinois concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

#### d. Clarifications, Negotiations, or Discussions Initiated by Serve Illinois

Serve Illinois may contact any applicant prior to the final award for the following purposes:

- 1) As part of the CNCS and Serve Illinois review process, Serve Illinois may request an applicant to clarify its proposal. An applicant may not be allowed to materially change its proposal in response to a request for clarification.
- 2) Discussions may be held to promote understanding of CNCS's requirements, Serve Illinois' priorities and the applicant's proposal, and to facilitate arriving at an agreement that will be most advantageous to the State considering cost and other evaluation factors set forth in the NOFO.
- 3) When IDPH or Serve Illinois knows or has reason to conclude that a mistake has been made, either party may ask the applicant to confirm the information. Situations in which confirmation should be requested include obvious or apparent errors on the face of the document or a cost unreasonably lower than the cost others submitted, or if the cost is considerably higher than what is currently paid for this type of service.

Some applicants may be asked to present their application to Serve Illinois staff or Serve Illinois Commissioners if deemed necessary.

#### e. *Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information*

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$150,000, CNCS and Serve Illinois is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Additionally CNCS and Serve Illinois may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$150,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems

accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS; CNCS and Serve Illinois will consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this *Notice*.

*d. Selection*

The final selection will be made by the Serve Illinois Commissioners utilizing the results of the peer review, staff review, focus area, geographic location, and other factors as deemed appropriate by the Commissioners.

Article III. ***Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.***

Applicants will be notified of award status after May 1, 2020. Awards will be made on or after July 1, 2020.

**F. Award Administration Information**

- ***State Award Notices***

Serve Illinois will make awards following the grant selection announcement. Serve Illinois anticipates announcing the results of this competition by notifying applicants no later than June 15, 2018. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Grant Officer is the authorizing document for grant activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

- ***Administrative and National Policy Requirements***

*Uniform Guidance*

All awards under this Notice are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

*Requests for Improper Payment Information*

CNCS and Serve Illinois may, from time to time, request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, CNCS and Serve Illinois may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

*CNCS Terms and Conditions*

All awards made under this *Notice* will be subject to the 2018 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2018 Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These Terms and Conditions contain

detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnccs-grants>.

#### *National Service Criminal History Check Requirements*

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving CNCS and Serve Illinois funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS and Serve Illinois funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Please budget at least \$75 per covered individual (staff and members) on the CNCS share of the budget. Grantees MAY utilize the two vendors CNCS has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Failure to conduct an NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

Unless CNCS and Serve Illinois has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients must perform the following checks–

All award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) and
- A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *or*
- A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 CFR § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and [CNCS Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

As of December 31, 2019, many pre-approved Alternative Search Procedures (ASPs) and any existing, individual ASP/Exemption requests will expire and will no longer be available for use.

#### *Use of Material*

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS and Serve Illinois funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS and Serve Illinois reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315 (b)).

- **Reporting**

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports, semi-annual financial reports, and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports and an internal or

external evaluation report. All grantees, including Fixed Amount grantees, submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System.

Award recipients will be required to report at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees. Recipients and subrecipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](#) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS and Serve Illinois with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
- The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
- The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

### **Progress Report Data**

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers.)

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future CNCS and Serve Illinois funding.

For further guidance and training resources see – [CNCS Performance Measure Resources](#).

### **G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

**Scott McFarland**

**Executive Director**

**Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service**

**422 S 5<sup>th</sup> St**

**Springfield, IL 62701**

**[Scott.McFarland@Illinois.gov](mailto:Scott.McFarland@Illinois.gov)**

**217-685-5930**

### **H. Other Information, if applicable**

*Continuation Funding Information and Requirements*

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY20 must submit an application in order

to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

### **1. Technical Assistance**

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Performance Measure Instructions, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, applicants are encouraged also to consult the CNCS and Serve Illinois web sites for a schedule of technical assistance conference calls, and Frequently Asked Questions that are updated during the competition period.

CNCS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. CNCS strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. The schedule and call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on CNCS's website: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>.

### **2. Reallocation of Funding**

CNCS and Serve Illinois reserves the right to reallocate funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

### **3. Application Instructions**

Refer to CNCS's application instructions available at <http://www.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/AmeriCorpsNOFO.aspx> to complete an application.

### **Mandatory Forms -- Required for All Agencies**

1. **Uniform State Grant Application** – Available at [idphgrants.com](http://idphgrants.com) for eligible applicants  
New to EGrAMS, click [HERE](#) to see how to Get Started
2. **Project Narrative** (included in EGrAMS application)
3. **Budget** (included in EGrAMS application)
4. **Budget Narrative** (included in EGrAMS application)

Other program-specific mandatory forms:

All applications must be submitted in the CNCS web-based management system to be considered for funding. If that system is not available by the deadline, Serve Illinois will announce an additional option to submit. Applicants WILL NOT submit in the EGrAMS system until after selection for award.